

Good afternoon,

You have joined the webinar for the 1.0 percent participation in the alternate assessment, known in North Carolina as the NCEXTEND1. This webinar will be hosted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) personnel Molly McGahey from the Accountability Services Division and Matthew Martinez, statewide consultant for students with significant cognitive disabilities. This webinar will be recorded and posted on the NCDPI's website under exceptional children and on the alternate assessment page. If you have any general questions, please post them to the chat box. The chat box will be monitored, and an FAQ sheet will be created and posted with this webinar. If you have any specific questions related to your LEA/charter school, please email Molly McGahey directly at molly.mcgahey@dpi.nc.gov and she will send a response to your unique situation.

Today, we will discuss North Carolina's definition of a significant cognitive disability, eligibility requirements as mandated by ESSA for a student taking the NCEXTEND1 and the 1% justification form.

A student with a significant cognitive disability is defined as: Students with significant cognitive disabilities who have cognitive and adaptive behavior functioning deficits that may prevent them from attaining grade level achievement standards, even with substantial program modifications and accommodations. They may require extensive individualized instruction across multiple settings to access and make progress in the learning environment. The significant cognitive disabilities cannot be the primary result of: excessive or extended absences, social, cultural, and economic differences, identification as an English Learner (EL), pre-determined poor performance on grade level assessments, administrator decision, educational environment or instructional setting.

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessments, the student must meet 4 requirements. The student must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP), the student must be enrolled in grades 3–8, 10 or 11 according to PowerSchool, the student must be instructed using the North Carolina *Extended Content Standards* in all assessed content areas, and the student must have a significant cognitive disability. Eligibility requirements can also be found within the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment test administration guide provided to testing coordinators.

The NCEXTEND1 is not appropriate for students who are: being instructed on the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* (NCSCOS) for any subject area, demonstrate delays in selected areas of academic achievement, delays attributed primarily to behavioral issues and if in high school, are pursuing a North Carolina High School diploma, including students enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) pathway.

Students being taught on the North Carolina *Extended Content Standards* in all areas, must take the NCEXTEND1 assessment in all areas. The instruction must match the assessment. Students participate in the regular assessments OR alternate assessments but cannot participate in both. This is based on the classroom instruction. Best practice indicates a student should be taught for 120 school days before the testing window in the content area being assessed. The 120 days is best practice to ensure the student has adequate exposure to the content standards in the assessed area.

We will now be discussing how the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, also known as ESSA changed the alternate assessment landscape. ESSA changed the 1.0 percent criteria from proficiency to participation rate for states. ESSA reaffirmed that the alternate assessment is the appropriate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. ESSA also continues to give final authority to IEP teams regarding decisions to which assessment is given to the student. However, the IEP team MUST follow the state guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment. ESSA requires states to ensure the total number of students assessed in each subject area using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards does not exceed 1.0 percent of the total number of all students assessed in each content area. Those areas are reading, mathematics and science.

District and charter schools who exceed the 1.0 percent participation for a given school year are required to provide the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction a justification of the need to assess more than 1 percent of their students on the NCEXTEND1 in any subject area.

Per general statute 115C dash 105 point 35, a state cannot prohibit an LEA/charter school from assessing more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students. Also, an LEA or charter school must submit a justification for the need to exceed the 1.0 percent. In addition, the state must provide

appropriate oversight to LEAs and charter schools. Finally, the state must make the justification forms publicly available while not revealing personally identifiable information.

ESSA includes assurances for informing parents about the standards to which their child's academic achievement will be measured and how participation in the alternate assessment may delay or otherwise affect completing requirements for a high school diploma.

We field questions about why did the federal government decide on 1.0 percent? This is based on current incidence rates of students nationwide with significant cognitive disabilities. This is also to ensure that low performing students are not participating in assessments and curricula that are inappropriately restricted in scope.

Currently, North Carolina is over the 1.0 percent ESSA mandate. For a state-wide data analysis, please refer to what is called the Green Book, linked on this slide. Below the green book link is a link to the all student and subgroup performance on all assessments, including the NCEXTEND1. Although no primary area of eligibility automatically qualifies a student for the NCEXTEND1, according to ESSA, the NCEXTEND1 is meant for students with significant cognitive disabilities. On this link, we see several students with primary area of eligibility such as SLD, speech or language impairment, orthopedic impairment and serious emotional disability are taking the NCEXTEND1 assessment.

The next section we will be discussing is justification information within the IEP as well as the revised 1.0 percent justification form, which is due to the NCDPI by May 3rd of 2019.

The *North Carolina Alternate Assessment Decision Making Flow Chart* found on the exceptional children's webpage is designed to help facilitate IEP team decisions about placing a student on the Extended Content Standards. This flow chart is a great resource for IEP teams to use and explore when discussing educational options for students. When using this flow chart, teams need to be aware all questions must be answered yes to move to the next section. For example, if a student does not demonstrate delays in adaptive behavior skills, the students will not be eligible for the NCEXTEND1. This document could be utilized in IEP meetings.

The IEP team is required to document participation in all assessments. However, when choosing the alternate assessment, IEP teams must provide ample justification for why the alternate

assessment is appropriate and why the regular testing program, with or without accommodations, is not appropriate.

Next, we will lead you through the new 1.0 percent participation justification form. This form must be completed when an LEA or charter school anticipates exceeding the 1.0 percent participation in a given grade or subject area for the current school year. When reviewing assessment data from the previous year, if the LEA or charter school exceeded the 1.0 percent last year, then you should anticipate submitting for this year. If you submit a form and are under the 1.0 percent mandate, those will not be publicly posted. Only those that exceed the 1.0 percent must be made publicly available.

Let's talk about the form:

Section one, labeled contact information should be completed. Enter contact information for the primary district or charter school staff member responsible for overseeing the completion of the form. The six fields are the LEA or charter 3-digit code, contact name, contact phone number, district or charter name, contact title and contact email.

Section two: analyzing contributing factors. The first question that must be addressed is was there thoughtful consideration for placing a student on the NCEXTEND1 through the use of eligibility criteria and the flowchart? There links on the form to view those documents. The next chart discusses what type of training the IEP team members have received in terms of NCEXTEND1 eligibility criteria.

Continuing on section two, the next question addresses the ESSA regulation in making appropriate identification for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Please use your data from the previous year to determine if students who do not traditionally participate in NCEXTEND1 are being administered the assessment.

Next, does your district or charter school provide a targeted program that may contribute to a higher enrollment. These programs could include but are not limited to separate schools and or programs.

The last question in section 2 addressed a district or charter school who may have a smaller overall student population which would increase the likelihood of exceeding the 1.0 percent

mandate. For example, if you have fifty (50) students testing on grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading, then one student taking the NCEXTEND1 in grade 3 will place you over the 1.0 percent mandate.

Section three discusses assurances. The first question centers on the processes in place to monitor alternate assessment participation. Please describe the process your lea or charter has in place and if not, please include any future plans or discussion in your response.

The next question is: Do you have a process in place to identify and address disproportionality in alternate assessment participation? Please describe the process your lea or charter has in place and if not, please include any future plans or discussion in your response.

For the last two questions, we would like to hear what your plan is and or what are you going to do to address these questions.

Section four, resources and technical assistance. This question: What resources and technical assistance does the district or charter school need from the NCDPI to ensure students are being assessed using the appropriate assessment? This is a chance for you to ask NCDPI for assistance in any form that is unique to your LEA or charter school.

The required signatures are the superintendent or charter school director, exceptional children director or coordinator and the charter school or lea testing coordinator.

The form is a fillable Word document that must be electronically completed, scanned and emailed to alternateassessment@dpi.nc.gov. These forms are reviewed for content as well as personally identifiable information. If personally identifiable information is within the form or there is content needed, the form will be sent back for revision and asked to be resubmitted.

Just as a reminder, LEAs and charter schools that exceed the 1.0 percent mandate will have their forms publicly posted. These justification forms must be an accurate and appropriate representation.

As a reminder, we will review the chatbox for questions and post the FAQ sheet in conjunction with this webinar on the exceptional children's webpage under significant cognitive disabilities support tools and on the accountability page. If you need further assistance, our contact information is provided in this slide.

Thank you for attending and best of luck this testing season.